

This is a moving
piece. There are only
a few minor corrections
to be made.
Mike vs. Bernie

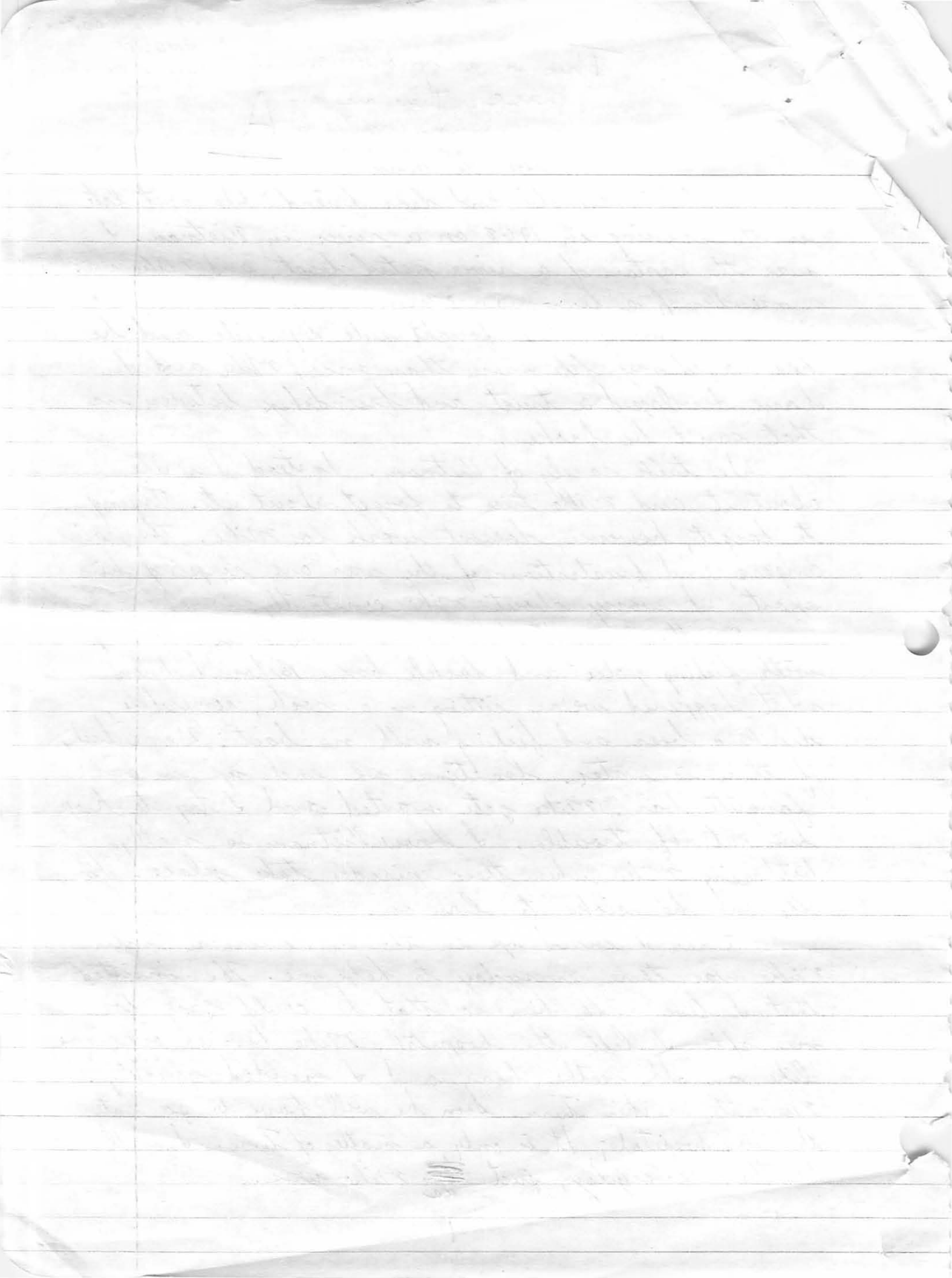
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Mike is an old and dear friend. We met late in the evening in 1968 on a river in Vietnam. I was the captain of a river patrol boat, and Mike was a member of a four-man marine recon team assigned to my command. We fought side by side and he has saved my life more than once. Mike and I have developed a trust and friendship between us that can't be broken.

We talk rarely of Vietnam. Instead I write about it and Mike tries to forget about it. Trying to forget, however, doesn't work for Mike. The pains, angers, and frustrations of the war are ripping him apart. I worry about Mike constantly.

On the spur of the moment Mike will show up with fishing poles and tackle box. Before I know what happened we're sitting on a rock, somewhere, drinking beer and fishing with no bait; We're lucky if there is water. Sometimes we end up in our favorite bar. Mike gets wasted and I try to keep him out of trouble. I know Vietnam is really bothering Mike when these episodes take place. I'm the one he picks to lean on.

When I ended up in the V.A. Medical Center, Mike was there everyday to help me. He insisted that I live with him so that he could care for me after I left the hospital. Mike hovered over me like an old mother bear and I mended quickly. Now it is his turn. Soon he will have to go into the V.A. hospital; It is only a matter of time. I will be there, everyday, just ~~the~~ as Mike was.

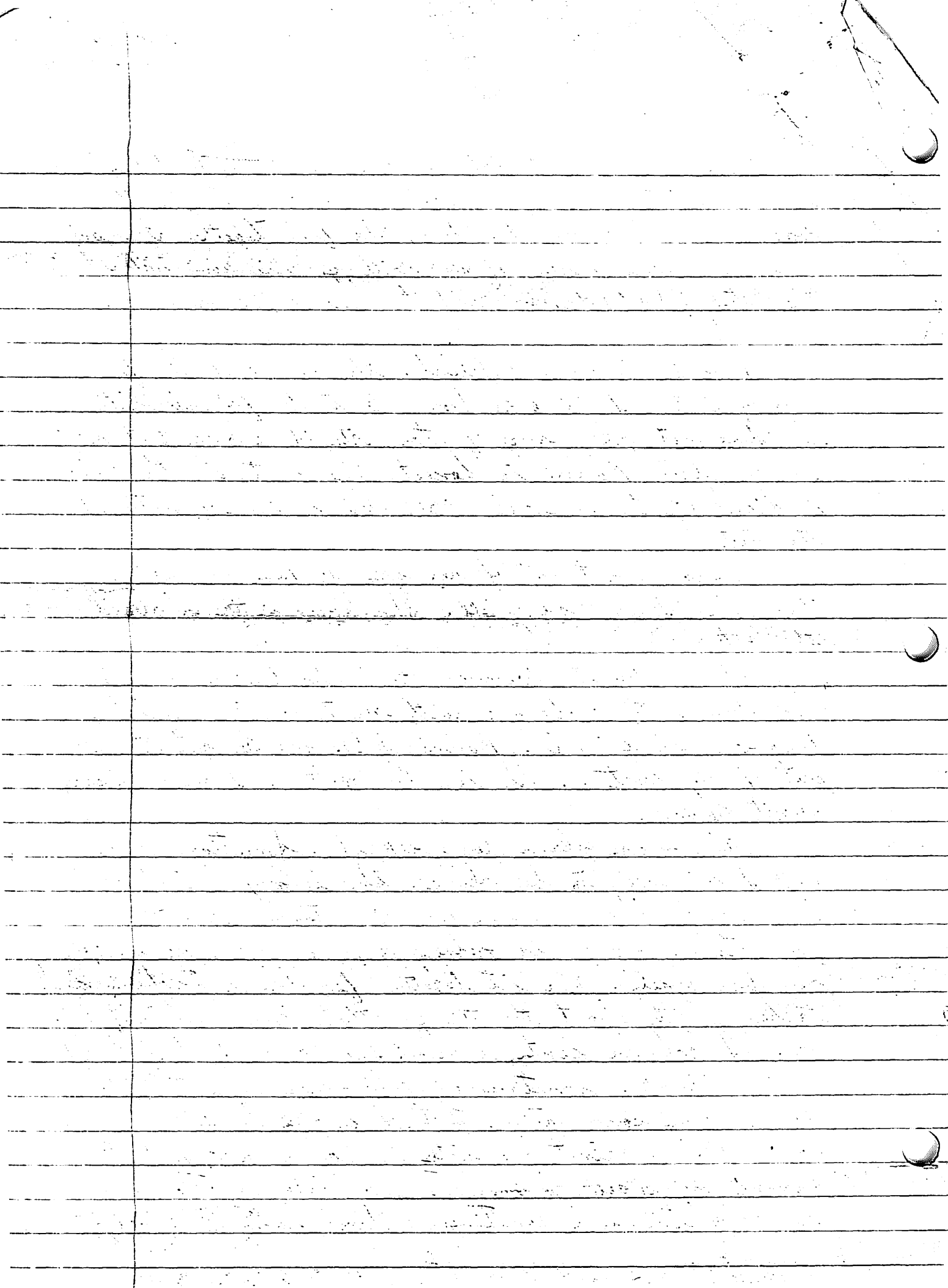


Mike and I don't talk much. We understand one-another perfectly. We play poker once a week in the back room of a nameless bar. We fish together at least once a week. Neither of us will go drinking without the other. (It's) damn good to have Mike around. I love him.

Bonni is a new friend. She is one of the few women that I have ever been able to be friends with. She does not play any of those stupid games that most women play. Bonni is honest. We met at the V.A. medical Center in early 1981. She is an Occupational therapist.

Bonni went out of her way to help me at a time when I was very ill. She knew nothing about the Vietnam war. Bonni saw so many of us that were screwed up by it, however, that she became curious and began to probe me with questions. We quickly became good friends. Bonni helps me to get the war out of my system. She is all-together. I never worry about Bonni.

We make plans for weekends. Sometimes Bonni and I go away to be alone. She is my friend and I sincerely hope our relationship stands upon that foundation. I can be totally different with Bonni; I can be myself. We sit together for hours touching and talking softly about the things that are meaningful to us. I can be gentle around her and if I feel like crying, it's ok. Sometimes we fall asleep on the floor after a long conversation. Later I awake to find her coiled close against me with her arms wrapped tight around my chest. I am overcome with emotion. I lie very still and sometimes a tear rolls down my



Possessive adjectives
don't take
apostrophes.

cheek and onto heels. Eventually I go back to sleep
a happy man.

Bonni and I have a friendship based on trust,
want and need. The need is mostly on my part.
She and I talk a lot. Rarely are we silent.

When we go out, it's not to drink, although I'm
we may have one or two. We frequent art
museums and live theatre performances. Bonni
loves the mountains and so do I. We sometimes
find ourselves high on the slopes and deep in
the woods. We sort-of experience ~~the~~ ^{each other} one another.
Without Bonni, I think I would be lost. With
her my life is rich and I can feel again.
She is breaking down the wall I built in Vietnam.
I love her.

